

## ARAB SPRING IN ARABIC FICTION AND PARADISE LOST

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### ABSTRACT

*No one denies what Arab Spring brought to the Arab world of destruction and loss. The revolutionaries did not think for a moment that they could reach this unknown and blurred future. The Arab countries are still suffering from the consequences of their uprisings confronted by conspiracy to turn the situation to the worse. The turmoil and conflicting interests of the varied factions continue and no hope to find settlement soon. Many writers express their worries and views about the Arab Spring in their writings whether in the form of articles, poems, or novels. Ibrahim Al Kuni, a Libyan novelist, is one of the writers who may not stand what his country, Libya, becomes during and pre/post of Arab Spring. He has written a novel entitled by "Knights of the Dead Dreams" to show how the Arab Spring started in Libya and the consequences of such a revolution. The study attempts to trace how Al Kuni portrays pre/post-Arab Spring situation and the political and social upheavals in Libya. Through a postcolonial approach, the narrative addresses many postcolonial concepts: displacement, terrorism, exile, and alienation. The study found that the situation became worse after the Arab Spring because such revolutions brought harm to the western interests and to the locals whose interests met with the west. The ex-regime leaders did not surrender easily to the change demands. Such powers do not need the Arab countries to settle to become consuming countries for their military equipment and they need a government in Arab countries that fulfill their interests.*

**KEYWORDS:** Arab Spring, Killed Dreams, Al Kuni-Libya, Terrorism & Turmoil

Original Article

**Received:** Feb 04, 2020; **Accepted:** Feb 24, 2020; **Published:** Mar 14, 2020; **Paper Id.:** IJELAPR20204

### INTRODUCTION

Arab countries are keen to lead freedom and honorable life. They spend a long time anticipating a better life, perhaps, one of the Arab leaders may bring to his people; however, they have been waiting for a long time, for a knight that may come to change and lead their lives to better. Oppression and tyranny are prevailing, tensions and instabilities are the master of the situation in most of Arab countries, if not all. Most of the Arab leaders do not pay any attention or consideration to the voices of the voiceless people. The revolutions/uprisings come to record the beginnings of sweeping tide of protest in the Arab countries streets. The revolutions are necessary in the eyes of the Arab nations whose leaders control their lives with power. The Arab peoples are searching for a genuine transition towards democracy that would lead their lives to better and open the gate of opportunities to their citizens. It is a revolution for a radical change in all aspects of life. The study examines how the Arab people look at Arab Spring, focusing on Ibrahim Al Kuni's "Knights of the Dead Dreams" who addresses the Libyan uprising in this narrative. Do the revolutionaries expect the failure of their uprisings and their rulers may confront their revolutions with conspiracies and counter-revolution? Do they expect that the western countries may interfere to protect their interests seen in the hands of the present regimes in most Arab countries?

## **ARAB SPRING: BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS**

What is Arab Spring? Arab Spring is a name given to the strong uprisings against the ruling party in most of Arab countries, strong protests, rallies, demonstrations, strikes, sit-ins in public squares and civil disobedience. Uprisings started in the capitals' centers of the Arab world countries to extend to the other significant cities, beginning in what it seemed peaceful rallies and protests to turn the Arab capitals into hot spots. The word of "Arab Spring" comes to express the aspiration of the Arab peoples to the freedom and social justice and get rid of corruption and nepotism. Abdel Salam Al Fateh (2015) pointed out "the use of the term 'Arab Spring' has since been criticized for being inaccurate and simplistic" (p. 122). Such uprisings and other forms of revolutions came to express the peoples' need to equality, justice, regime transition and redistribution the wealth equally.

The genuine beginning of the Arab Spring started dramatically in Tunisia on December 17, 2010, when a street vendor, Mohammed Bouazizi, set himself on fire, protesting on the brute treatment of the country officials and their tyranny that did not allow to such a simple man to earn his living. His death ignited the streets of Tunisia in particular and the Arab world in general with protests, demonstrations, sit-ins and other phenomena of rejecting the violent procedures taken against the simple people and their simple demands of honorable living. Such demonstrations moved very quickly from one of the Arab countries to another until they encompassed the most states of the Arab world. The revolutionary movements led the beginning of Arab awakening or Arab Spring, hoping such demonstrations and protests would force the Arab leaders and rulers to reconsider their internal policies towards their peoples. They would force them to endeavor to improve the living standards of their peoples and fulfill the social justice among them. However, the Arab leaders could not stand to find themselves away of the ruling chair. The Arab leaders conspired, even with the enemies, to destroy the youth revolution at its bud, ignoring the interest of their nations and their peoples. They led their countries to more bloodshed and violence, but they assisted the enemies to lead their countries to the civil wars as what occurred in Syria, Yemen, Libya and other states.

What are the reasons behind riot and turmoil in Arab states? The reasons refer to the social injustice, corruption, tyranny, nepotism, violation of human rights, freedom restrictions, classicism...etc. all privileges in the hands of the elite in the ruling party. They control and encompass wealth and the influential positions for themselves and their relatives. The simple demands of the peoples are to live honorable lives and fulfill the equality, and they are in search for improving living standards and the quality of education. Saidin (2018) argued that "According the March 2011 report from National Lawyers Guild (US), Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers (UK) and Mazlumder (Turkey), the Tunisian revolutionaries were spurred on to take to the streets by endemic poverty, rising food prices, and chronic unemployment. Despite its economic growth and macroeconomic performance in the early 2000s, however, Tunisia is a complex case". (P. 71). The sweeping tide of change spread very quickly in most of Arab countries: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and lately Sudan and Lebanon. The uprising managed to enforce Zine Al Abidin ben Ali to resign in Tunisia and it led Hosni Mubarak to leave the ruling chair in Egypt. The protests in Libya succeeded to topple the President Muammar Al Gadhafi's regime, to be killed at the end by the revolting power. In Yemen, the growing protest put an end to Ali Abdullah Saleh's reign and his ally, Houthis, killed him when he started to show opposition. He conspired with his allies against the youth revolution by holding a coalition with Houthis to revenge from the revolutionaries. He assisted them to put their hands on the military camps and military machineries. Finally, Houthis killed Ali Abdullah without regarding his coalition with them. Elfatih Abdelsalam (2015) stated, "Most of the demonstrations that emanated from the Arab Spring have been met with violent crackdown from state machineries as well as from government created militias and counter demonstrators" (p. 122).

In Syria, the protesters could not achieve any progress because the regional and international power protected the Syrian regime. The global and regional powers conspired to keep instability in the Arab countries. The uprisings turned to civil wars in Yemen, Syria, and Libya. The global powers encouraged the previous regime to come back to control the political situation as what occurred in Egypt and Syria.

The regional and global powers were not satisfied with such liberating movements. They worked with the leaders whose interests meet with them to put an end to the youth uprising, but they went in counter-revolution. The technology of communication such as social networking platform unified the youth's political situation, informed the youth about the status quo in their countries and the position of the international community from their revolutions. Such social media networking assisted in speeding up the steps of revolution and its success in all countries of Arab world, Arab Spring countries in particular. It created a strong bond among the different segments of the community in their different cities to keep in touch with the last developments in the political situation and organized a unified work against the ruling party and its policies. In addition, the news channels such as Al Jazeera, CNN, and BBC...etc., that worked in twenty four hours to air the last developments of the uprisings of the youth in different places to keep the plans of the revolutionaries unified and maintained the youth of revolution in touch with each other. Such political reports and coverage informed the youth of the revolutions in different countries of Arab world about the different political reports that shed the light on their uprisings.

Saidin (2018) pointed out the impact of social networking platform on the youth revolution "Before Ben Ali regime collapsed, more than a thousand people were tweeting each day about that political change in Tunisia, an action which led to the people's high determination to materialize a democratic transition". (p. 74). The social media played a vital role in the hot political conversations that encouraged the youth to take actions and moved to the streets to force the regime in their country to take fast steps to satisfy some of the youth revolution demands. Further, such conversations and revolutionary debates shaped the political attitude towards matured steps on the ground. Bouazizi's victimization inspired the oppressed peoples to go for strong protests in the main squares of the Arab world capitals.

In Libya, the international powers assisted in accelerating the end of authoritarian regime headed by Moammar Al Gadhafi. Martin Beck and Simone Hüser (2012) argued "In case of Libya, much evidence indicates that Muammar Gaddafi's regime would not have been overthrown without the intervention of NATO, as the military capabilities of the opposition were too weak to prevail against the forces of the regime" (p. 203).

The slogans that spread in most of Arab Spring states were similar to each other. Some of states copied the other slogans to be their revolutions mottoes such as 'the people want to bring down the regime', 'bread, freedom, and dignity', 'Go away' etc. the Arab world peoples are in search of dignity and honorable livelihood that the regime did not provide to them. Unlimited number of youth did not find jobs. They are holders of high certificates and at the same time, they could not find jobs given to unqualified people under the concept of nepotism. The unemployed line of the youth is very long and the government stood helpless to provide the unemployed youth with the jobs to earn their living and live honorable lives.

## **SUCCESS OF THE POLITICAL TRANSITION IN ARAB SPRING WORLD**

Arab uprisings and revolutions have achieved to some extent a sort of success in some Arab Spring countries. However, such a success was very limited and the two parties might not reach it without offering concessions: the government party, from one hand, and opposition one connected with the youth of revolution from the other hand. The case of Tunisia, the revolutionaries managed to put an end to the authoritarian rule of Ben Ali and forced him to resign in January 2011. This revolution has achieved

a sort of success because of stability reached by taking fast steps to satisfy the revolutionary demands through appointing a new government that satisfy all the parties and at the same time, reconsidering a new constitution. Tunisia uprising fulfilled a political transition that led the country to acceptable stability and achieved the main goals of the revolution.

However, in the case of Egypt, the youth uprising managed to force Hosni Mubarak to resign, but the military forces still control the situation. The youth revolution managed to bring a new president to the ruling chair; however, the counter-revolution led by the military men aborted the new birth democracy and led the new president, late Mohammed Mursi, to jail under many allegations of high treason. They held many interrogatory sessions in the court to verdict him. He passed away lately in one of such court interrogations. The youth revolution might not be able to achieve a success to their revolution. The inter/national powers that see in the new change a peril replaced the ex-regime with a new regime connected with the previous regime came to take revenge from the youth by hitting with the iron fist to kick the demonstrators and protesters out of the public squares by force. Many youth had been killed with cold blood to open the gate for the military men to retake and put their hands on the state again.

In Libya, the revolution managed to topple President Moammar Gadhafi, but the internal and external conspiracies worked on aborting the revolution and led the country to fragile stability led by different military factions supported by the external hands to create instability and led the country to civil war. The revolution did not manage to lead the country to the political transition peacefully. The sound of the guns are still the master of the situation in Libya.

The situation in Yemen is not very different from Libya; NATO interfered to protect its interests in Libya. Simultaneously, in Yemen the Arab coalition led by Saudi Arabia interfered to protect its interests, recognizing the conspiracy led by Iran to destroy the kingdom regime through its allies in Yemen, Houthis. Perhaps, the youth revolution managed to topple Saleh and his regime, but they could not reach stability because of the rising of Houthi Movement with the assistance of Iran and ex-regime of Ali Abdullah Saleh to hold that coalition to destroy the youth revolution and take revenge from that revolution. He did not know that his allies might kill him. Houthis killed Ali Abdullah Saleh when he started to show opposition to their authoritarian project. So far, the future of the war that exceeds the Yemen borders is blurred. The interfering of the Arab coalition is to lead the country to two types of wars: civil war led by the first part, Houthis and the second party: the military camps that are loyal to the elected president Abdurabu Mansour, the legitimate president of Yemen agreed upon by all parties in Yemen earlier. The second war led by Saudi Arabia by air between Houthis and Arab coalition by the leadership of Saudi Arabia. The big loser in such a war is the Yemeni people who lack the simplest components of lives. Poverty, tyranny and oppression are prevailing. Yemen becomes for most Yemenis as a big prison. The airports and land ports are under strict watching. Travelling, even for the injured and sick people, is a huge problem. The air flights are very limited; using Yemenia Airlines, for only very limited number of people and very limited number of flights for a high-recommended segment of community.

In contrast with Sudan, Sudan revolted against Al Bashir's regime. The revolutionary powers managed to topple Al Bashir's regime, however, the situation is still foggy because the military council provide his people with many promises for reforms. The upcoming days will uncover to where the military council leads their people. Eventually, the two parties have signed an agreement to put an end to the strikes and set-ins in the streets.

#### **AL KUNI'S KNIGHT OF THE DEAD DREAMS**

Ibrahim Al Kuni was born in 1948 in Ghadamis city and was raised in the open-air desert of Tuareq. Living in a desert has

given Al Kuni special style in living and writing. He accomplished his study in Mosco that taught him the great sense of thought liberation and words freedom, regardless of his study in the area of comparative literature that has refined his skills and talents and given him a full insight into the literature perfect potentials. Al Kuni has published a large number of literary/ non-literary works that exceed eighty books in varied area of literary studies, novels in particular. Such works led him to be honored by many inter/national awards. A large number of his literary works have been translated into many international languages to engrave a name to him in the global arena as one of the greatest novelists of the world in general and in Arab world in particular.

He wrote many literary works that make him known in the world of literature. He wrote *A dose of Blood* (1993)- (a collection of stories), *The Gold* (1990), *The Cage* (1990)- a collection of Stories), *Al Majous*- part 1 (1990)- part 2(1991), *Heaven Prospects* (1991)- a collection of Stories, *The Lost Facts of Al Majous Biography* (1992)- a collection of Stories, *Darwish (Dervish) Autumn* (1994), *The Magicians*- Part 1 (1994- part 2(1995), *The Puppet* (1998), *Knight of the Dead Dreams* (2012), and *She- Camel of Allah* (2015). Many other novels have been translated into different international languages: *Gold Dust*, translated by Elliott Colla, *Bleeding of the Stone*, translated by May Jayyusi and Christopher Tingly, *The Animists*, translated by Elliott Colla, *Anubis: A Desert Novel*, translated by William Hutchins, *The Seven Veils of Seth*, translated by Hutchins, *The Puppet*, translated by Hutchins, and other literary works that have taken A place as prominent novels in the area of narration.

Ibrahim Al Kuni has managed to engrave a name for himself in the world of literature and his literary works have obtained a remarkable reputation in the world. He concerns with narration and critical studies in general. A French Magazine, *Lear*, selected him as one of the most international prominent novelists. His reputation exceeds the boundaries of his country to reach America, Europe, Japan and other countries. He was short listed for Nobel Prize many times. He occupied many journalistic and diplomatic posts: a consultant for many Libyan Embassies: in Russia, Poland and Switzerland. He was appointed as an editor-in chief for Libya-Poland Friendship Magazine. He worked for the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Media and Culture.

Al Kuni's *Knights of the Dead Dreams* (2012) reflects the reality of political situation in Libya before/during the Arab Spring of Libya. It comes to touch the reality that has been lived by the author, it recorded the bloody moments, fear and terrorism swept the whole cities of Libya. He portrayed a reality, which he was a part of it, but he lived its events as a Libyan citizen. It is not easy to differentiate between its imagined facts and the realities lived. He represented the community he is a part of it and his direct contact with its people, and its daily events whether before/during the Arab Spring. The author had been influenced negatively by its consequences.

The narrative traces the last days of the ex-regime of Al Qaddafi, which controlled Libya for more than forty years of oppression, freedom restrictions, and excessive power against the people. The regime did not give any opportunity to the journalists and intellectuals to express their ideas without interfering the regime to shut their mouths by temptation or terror. The political situation and turmoil led many writers to write about the miseries of the Arab people with their authoritarian regime. In the preface of the novel (*Knights of the Dead Dreams*), Saif Al Murri (2012) stated that

The best imagination that is based on the reality. From here, the Knight of the Dead Dreams obtains its imagined reality or the realistic imagination, its power, its glory, and its impact from Libyan Arab Spring. No one is able to go deeply into the Libyan character as Ibrahim Al Kuni, being one of its sons. He has lived and observed its events and characters, but he has stung by the fire of its executors, suffered from its oppressors and endured the consequences of his

rejection to its defunct leadership approach" (*Knights of the Dead Dreams*, P. 4).

### **LIBYAN LIFE OF PRE-UPRISING DUE TO *THE KNIGHTS OF DEAD DREAMS***

The protagonist starts to compare his life before the uprising and the transformation during the revolution, Arab Spring. He is a part of that place and he belongs to its people. The narrator is the protagonist; he does not only narrates a story connected with him only, it is the story of any one in Libya, but in the world of Arab Spring. He narrates the pains and miseries of his life, which are the miseries of many generations. He symbolizes the youth of uprising as knights and the setting of place is Libya. However, it is a symbol of many states in the Arab Spring world.

The protagonist is one of the Knights of the Dead Dreams whose dreams born dead and do not assist him to move easily to stability and enjoy the life of revolution that supposes to bring stability and safety to the people. The counter-revolution turns their dreams to dead ones. The conspiracies of ruling regime force do not give the revolutionaries a moment to breathe the air of freedom. The international world that finds their interests with the ex-regime could not grant the people and youth the anticipated peace.

The protagonist begins his narration by comparing between yesterday and today. His past life and the present one. In the past, he was only concerned with his own business and lived his own life away of politics and turmoil. He was interested in reading, attempting to keep his mind in peace. However, the bloody events and the death of the people around could not give him an opportunity to reconsider his decision to be one of the knights who defend the people dignity and fight against tyranny and oppression. He revolted as the others to put an end to the corruption and social injustice. The life of alienation in the past with the books and reading might not help him today. He compared himself to the books mouse that its interest was only to devour the books. His interest was restricted to the books and reading. He was concerned only with his own business. However, today he becomes a wall mouse, moving on the wall to find better fate, Samir Pointed out (2012) "The oppressive al-Qadhafi regime fostered a culture of dependency and hatred in which people were effectively deprived of their right to live freely. And by failing to provide or expand Libyans' access to a decent education, adequate health care and employment, the regime robbed them of their social choices and opportunities. The privilege of engaging in free enterprise and yielding its benefits were reserved exclusively for those within the tyrant leader's inner circle" (p, 42).

Today, he has changed his life to engrave a road on the wall to reach the Al Dhaman Building that represented the tyranny and the destructive military machineries of the regime. It becomes the symbol of death to the revolutionaries. The snippers with the modern destructive weapons awaiting to snipe the people in the streets, whether they are from the people of revolution or not. They direct their guns to any moving creature, "do you think walking with a heavy conscience freedom? Does freedom mean walking on the earth as a beast? No! No! Moving on the earth is not freedom, but it is a sort of moving, however, resisting the siege on the wall cracks is the genuine meaning of freedom, what freedom!" (p. 13).

### **ADVANTAGES OF THE ARAB SPRING**

The Arab Spring has united the people attitudes towards many things despite their varied affiliations and it brought them together to stand in the same trench against tyranny and oppression, defending of their sacred rights of freedom. The closed relationships become torn and encompassed with hate and hatred even that relationships involved with the kinships. The Arab Spring made the people reconsider their relationship with the others, whether that kinship or neighbors relationships. Al Kuni pointed out what type of a relationship that were prevailing before Arab Spring. It was very fragile. The hate relationship controlled the lives of the people. Al Kuni argued, "The people were cursed. They hide a deep hatred for each

other, free hatred because it has no reason. A mother of the son is not a mother; the son is not a son, what is said about the kinship relationships despite the closed connection could be said about non- relative relationships and strangers' relationships" (p. 16).

The beginning of demonstrations was weak and the number of the people is very limited. However, they realized the significance of participation in such events to protect their rights, family, and children to stop the military machineries that did not differentiate between a man and a woman, between a peaceful one and a warrior. The people pre- Arab Spring feel lost and meaningless lives. The world is absurd because the perfect lives are only for the leaders and their relatives. Nepotism was prevailing to grant privileges to special elites surrounded the regime; Samir Saadawi (2012) argued, "The uprising in Benghazi was triggered by Muammar al-Qadhafi's violent response to peaceful demonstrations in which Libyans demanded the release of political prisoners. In a futile attempt to regain lost ground, the infamous Khamis Brigade, the tyrant leader's security force, resorted to the massacre of innocent Libyans, committed acts of genocide against a peaceful population, and imposed a blockade on the Libyan capital of Tripoli" (p. 41).

If the only advantage of the Arab Spring was to bring the people together against tyranny, it would be sufficient. The relatives and the neighbors forgot their differences and their hatred to stand in the same trench to defend their dignity violated by the regime men. The generation lost its faith in ability to change their lives to better. The oppression practiced against them drove them to lose their faith in everything. The trust in each other was lost. The best one of them favored to live his own life, away of politics and away of other people's interests, "I huddled around myself like a hedgehog because I found isolation is the best weapon to defend myself, the best weapon to confront the enmity" (p. 19). The isolation is another challenge because it may lead the person to the killing emptiness, "I'm from a generation does not believe in anything, but perhaps a generation which never believe in anything one day. A generation was born dead, because it opened its eyes on a dead world! A bleak horizon despite its singing day and night with the heaven of the green color" (p. 16).

It is the green heaven that their late ruler promised them to live under the shadows of his Green book, which he promised to be the end of their miseries. However, it remains just ink on the papers, just fake promises. Empty promises does not change anything in their real lives. The people became thinking of suicide more than life. It is the obsession of all people when they reached a desperate point to change the world around them. This is, in fact, what occurred to the inspirer of the Arab Spring revolutions when he could not find any mercy of the officers, but officials to live an honorable life, he set himself on fire to put an end to his miseries. His act ignited the demonstrations in the Arab world and created a generation who believed in change. The great teacher's sacrifice was to awake the Arab people from their drowsiness. He succeeded to awake them to find uprisings swept most of the Arab capitals.

The citizens are waiting only to a huge event that revive their souls. With the first drop of blood in the square, the people took to the streets, preceded with the youth who ignited the revolution, "so that it is said: the heroes who sleep under the grave stones, no existence for the heroes still in life" (p. 31). The Libyan citizen, according to the narrative, does not find respect or appreciation in his home, Libya, and he may not find abroad. The Arab citizen becomes very cheap at his home, and accused of terrorism outside. Therefore, he struggles for an honorable life or death. The life of a big prison at home could not assist him to pursue his life away of troubles. He may find death is better than that a big prison called a home, "how he didn't choose death that generation who lived in a home which is a prison, not a home. It is not sufficient for the servants of the icon to change the home into a prison, and the citizens to prisoners in their home. However, they have cheated to establish a prison accompanies them wherever they are: a wicked, vile prison covered in a travel document

marked with the color of curse that stretch out to them the hand of the unknown to imprison them in every land" (p. 32).

### A HARD JOURNEY TO FREEDOM

The hero as the other revolutionaries, his dream to reach Al Dhaman Building to stop the mass destructive machineries of the regime that do not stop killing and snipping the passer by in the streets. Al Dhaman Building is tall and the view let the regime snippers see any movement for a human being or even an animal and start to direct their bullets to end his/its lives. The revolutionaries attempt to reach this building to control and stop the snippers from killing the citizens, "no salvation from the trap, only by retaking the fort at any price, it is a salvation for the city, but no a salvation for cities, no a salvation for home without regaining the domineering building that oversees all city buildings" (p. 139). The revolutionaries' determination to stop the destructive machinery of the regime becomes the obsession they live for. Abdul-Aziz Al Maqaleh (2014), a Yemeni poet, expresses such moments in one of his poems, Althawrah. Ye. Cultural Corner.

Silence is a shame,  
 Fear is a shame,  
 Who are we?  
 Lovers of the day,  
 We live,  
 We love,  
 We quarrel with the ghosts,  
 Live in waiting.  
 We will continue digging in the wall,  
 We either open a gap of light or die on the wall,  
 No despair our shovels perceive and no boredom refraction,  
 If the spring clouds did not rain and the train passed in summer,  
 The clouds of spring are our spring, full of rains.  
 Moreover, we have with the sterile shortage of rain attempts and tests,  
 Tomorrow will be the victory,  
 Tomorrow will be the victory.

The road to the Al Dhaman Building is not easy and no way for the resistant to reach the building without receiving a bullet, that may put an end to his life. The revolutionaries need to think of other ways to reach the building, which becomes a symbol of cruelty and crime of the regime that does not distinguish between a man and a woman, a boy or an adult, a human being or an animal. Their destructive weapons do not leave a living being passing peacefully in streets without directing their guns towards their bodies to leave them scattered on the street and they do not leave any one to assist. They snipe even the people who want to help the injured citizens.

The hero with his friends think to dig a tunnel that let them reach the building without receiving the bullets of the sniper. The thought of the tunnel needs great efforts and many men to achieve their goals of digging the tunnel. Despite all difficulties, the hero and his friends attempt to dig the tunnel. It is not only the problem of the hardship of digging, but also rejection of some owners of the neighboring houses to let them dig the tunnel beside or through their houses, "no way, only to dig a crept penetrating the houses to approach the bastion of evils! A crept penetrating the houses" (p. 155).



Eventually, they have managed to reach the building. However, they have sacrificed many of their friends, the hero has lost one of his legs, and his leg is replaced with an artificial one. The doctor comes to help him, "when I asked the doctor how he reached me. He glances over me surprisingly before saying: I reached you by the virtue of the tunnel or you devalue your work like the other great heroes" (P. 177). The tunnel is very significant to make the hero and his friend able to silence the sound of the snippers' bullets. The road of revolution is hard and the men of resistance have presented huge sacrifices to stop the snippers' destructive machineries.

During their hard journey to the building, they have seen many families and women raped by the regime soldiers without any mercy, but they practice the most heinous crimes against the families. The soldiers intend to torture the members of the families by letting them watch their sexual harassment and abuse against their families. It is not only a physical torture, but also they practice another sort of torture: the psychological one that may not be erased from the memories of the families, particularly for whom would live.

The revolution reveals the wicked works and crimes of the regime that lead the most silent majority to join the resistance when they see the destructive machine of the regime killing without mercy. Like our hero, who is one of the knights of the Dead Dreams, who isolated himself before the revolution and place his interest in reading the books, but the bloody events revolt even the simple people who favor to live their lives away of politics and regime, being unable to change the situation in the past. However, as soon as the opportunity comes, all the youth find no excuse to join the resistance and change the history of oppression and social injustice. Now no time to theories, it is the times of supporting the justice and its people.

The oppression and killing are prevailing. No one may bear their tyranny and crime against the people. No way, only to stand in the same trench and in the same line to defend their rights but to snatch their legitimate rights and ensure equal rights for all without special privileges for the ruling elite.

#### AL KUNI'S *KNIGHTS OF DEAD DREAMS* AND SYMBOLISM

The passport becomes an indication to the value of its holder. The passport symbolizes the value of your country in the eyes of the others. "it is sufficient to be stopped by the security man in any country as soon as he sees your passport to declare the emergency at the airport to comprehend that you are not worth of life only but also you are a danger on life" (p. 31). The person obtains the value from the value of his passport and the passport derives its power from the power of the country. A human being becomes worthless if his country is regarded a source of terrorism and troubles. His passport becomes a curse and a source of troubles to its holder. To the narrative, the passport becomes a curse and symbolizes degradation and contempt because the country the citizen lives in does not show any respect to their citizens, what does the citizen expect from the others to do for him? The home becomes as a prison and the citizens as prisoners. The application for a visa to any country in the world will be met with rejection to realize that the citizen is a zero and he has no right to travel, but no right to live. "How the death does not choose the generations who live in a home which is a prison and it is not a home" (p. 33). "But they tend to establish a prison for them accompanied them where they go: a vile prison embodied in a travel document mingled with the color of curse to extend to the hand of the unknown to jail them in all lands..." (p. 34).

The Arab spring makes the rule party and the regime to release many mottos that symbolize the policies of the leadership and become famous in the arena of politics. For instance, the narrative reveals some of Al Qaddafi's words to belittle the revolution and its adherents. "Don't forget the will: a home a home and an inch and an inch". (p. 38). It

symbolizes the policy of the leadership, which aired on TV, that encourages the criminals of the regime to search everywhere to get rid of the revolutionaries.

The leader of the regime goes ahead to call the opponents names as mice and cowards because they only live in sewage and dark places as mice. He intends to degrade them and belittle their revolution. "The leader does not miss when he calls the devils by the name of mice" (p. 38). Mice are to show his hate and hatred against the revolutionaries and the youth of the revolution who struggle to liberate their home from the regime who only concerns with its interests. The revolutionaries, in the eyes of the regime leader, are nothing and they cannot change the situation for their interest.

Al Dhaman Building does not offer any kind of insurance for the people, the name is ironic and sarcastic, and instead, it offers death and bullets to the citizens. The regime troops/snippers have taken advantage of the building because it is the tallest building in the area to launch attacks against the revolutionaries. They have directed their guns towards the chests of the passersby, but to any moving being, whatever, a human being or an animal, a resistant or a citizen who has no connection with fighting or politics. Al Dhaman building becomes a symbol of destruction and death. It does not provide the citizens with insurance in need and peace, and it offers only death and damage for the people and the buildings.

For the revolutionaries, to control Al Dhaman building is to stop the machinery of death. It represents the regime power and the hell that send their killing bullets towards the chest of the people. They do not keep mercy to any thing: no mercy for a woman, an old man, or a child. The building becomes a symbol of the regime domination. To control the building means for the strugglers and revolutionaries is to control, contain and subjugate the regime snippers and troops. So that the revolutionaries do not exert any efforts to reach Al Dhaman building to change the situation to their benefit.

Eventually, the revolutionaries think seriously how to reach the building and stop the machinery of destruction and death whatever the hardship of the means. They think of digging a tunnel to reach the building. They work day and night to confront many troubles because the ordinary people have not given the revolutionaries a permission to dig a tunnel easily through their houses. They have attempted many times to persuade the citizens; at last, they have engraved the tunnel. The road to Al Dhaman building through the tunnel symbolizes the road of freedom bestowed with thorns and risks. The heroes of the revolution have lost their friends on their way to the building, but their way to freedom and the protagonist has lost his leg to find himself in the hospital with an artificial leg. The road to freedom needs sacrifices and the greatest sacrifices are the sacrifices of the one's life, the friends and the relatives.

A street vendor, Mohammed Bouazizi, set himself on fire, symbolizes the fuel of the Arab spring. The icon, which awakens the Arab people to confront the oppression, nepotism, injustice, and miserable life under the dictatorship regimes in the Arab world. His sacrifice awakens the Arab world to take bold steps to liberate themselves from oppression and injustice. His death is inspiration to many generations. "Yes, all of us on Bouaziz's religion. However, Bouazizo recognized how to dig and he succeeded, whereas we stumbled in our digging so that we were late" (p. 184).

The Green Book of the ex- president, Moammar Al Qaddafi, is a symbol of fake promises and the arrogance of the leader who sees in his theory a solution for the world problems while his country was suffering of oppression and backwardness. He urged the Libyan people to believe in his theory addressed in the Green Book, to believe in its policies and plans as a holy Book. The irony is that the Green Book is a symbol of loss and lies. It did not offer something tangible that may change the Libyan lives into better.

In addition, the author makes the identity of the protagonist unknown and he is a narrator, the first person of point

of view, to give a deep insight into the path of sacrifice and freedom, to be a symbol of all Libyan loyal people to their home. He is unknown soldier, waiting for no rewards or praise. He is a knight of knights who serve his country and his deeds and brave actions will lead to him and make the people point the finger of respect and appreciation to his glorifying achievements. He is only one of the knights of Libya who attempt to see his home in a better situation.

## CONCLUSIONS

Al Kuni's Knight of the Dead Dreams exposed the human violation during the Arab spring in Libya. Arab peoples attempted hard to change political, social and economic situations to be better. However, the ruling regime did not give the uprising a space to express their demands and their desire to reach a radical change in all aspects of life. The conspiracies from inside and outside their countries were designed to hinder the progress of the revolution.

The narrative reflected the reality of regime and the political situation in Libya. It uncovered the evil means of the ruling party to fail the uprising and kill their activists and leaders. The ruling party violated human rights by killing, raping and jailing the revolutionaries. They did not hesitate to practice the cruelest types of torture. The regime snipers killed every moving being whether he was a participant in the revolution or not. They killed men, women, children, and old men. Women were raped before their husbands and relatives. The ones who survived the regime killing machinery, they became deformed and disabled. The scars in their bodies and deformity represented the cruelty and criminality of the ruling party.

Al Kuni's Knights of Dead Dreams found that the revolution of the Arab spring in Libya could not achieve its complete goals of prosperity and honorable life. It did not reach the stability and anticipated success because of the conspiracies of the internal/external powers, which did not want the Arab peoples to enjoy stability and prosperity. The narrative exposed the sufferings of all segments of the people: men, women, children and old men/women. Raping women and destroying everything on their way were the marks of damage and alienation. The troops of the regime did not spare anything. The sound of bullets and artillery were prevailing everywhere.

The revolutionaries sacrificed their lives and lost their parts of their bodies to reach an honorable life. The ruling party forces and the countries, which their interests met, the ruling party did not like to see the success of Arab spring. Arab spring uprisings and revolutions valued as a threat to their thrones and interests. The ex-regime power with the assistance of the western power aborted the revolution and managed to twist the course of the events for their benefits. Such powers exerted their efforts to undermine the Arab spring and its positive consequences. The narrative exposed that the regime had the military power of a country while the revolutionaries had only simple weapons incomparable with the military machine of the ruling party. The sound of terrorism was very high to silence and scare the youth of revolution in particular and the citizens in general. The counter-revolution becomes a tool of destruction and a tool of conspiracy against the national power.

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